

CHAPTER 9

WRITING HEADLINES AND CUTLINES

You have just delivered a story to your associate editor that is arguably the best you have ever written. The lead is first-rate, the body copy is flawless and the ending is textbook.

However, the story might vanish into obscurity on any newspaper page if the accompanying headline does not entice or inform the reader.

Well-written headlines grab the reader's attention, convey clear, concise thoughts and dress up the publication. Poorly written headlines can mislead, confuse and even embarrass the newspaper staff, command and Navy. Headlines must be free of libelous statements and must not contain violations of security, accuracy, policy and propriety.

A reader often decides whether to read a story based on what the headline says. A headline tempts the reader to dig into the story. To do this, you, as a headline writer, must have a sense of what will attract the reader. You must have a broad vocabulary and enough versatility to say the same thing several ways to make sure the headline will fit the space allotted for it on the page.

In the following text, we cover the essentials you need to become an effective headline writer. Additionally, we examine the methods used to write cutlines (the explanatory matter supplementing photographs) in the final third of this chapter.

HEADLINE EVOLUTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Evaluate the evolution of the headline.

The first American newspaper headlines were nothing more than labels. A large capital letter, called an "initial letter," may have been used to set off the first paragraph of each story. Sometimes the front-page headlines were one-line labels showing the origin of the news (England, France, Spain).

By the time of the Revolutionary War, American newspapers had made some progress in the art of writing headlines, but not much. A full-page account of the battle between the *Bon Homme Richard* and HMS *Serapis*, for example, might have been carried under a 10-point, Old English typeface headline which read as follows:

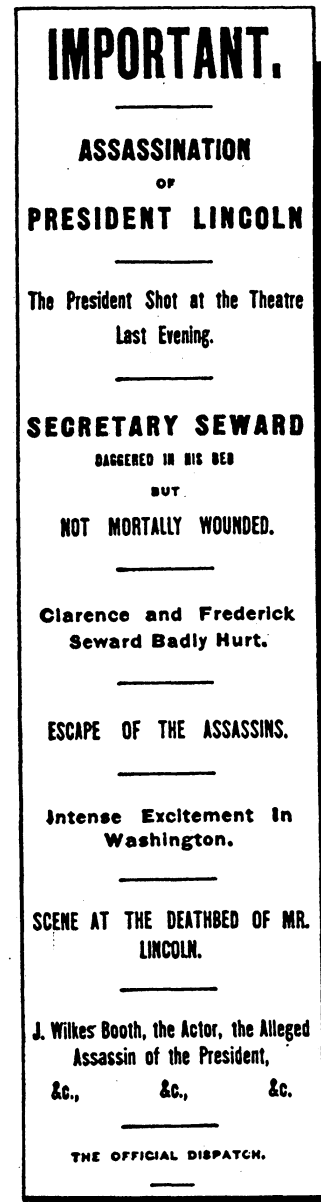


Figure 9-1.—Multidecked headline from the *New York Sun* following the assassination of President Lincoln.

Epic Sea Battle

An epic sea battle between the *Bon Homme Richard* and the HMS *Serapis* was waged on the high seas. . . .

During the Civil War, American newspapers began putting more information in their headlines, but their form was very different from what we are accustomed to today. Figure 9-1 shows a multidecked headline

carried by the *New York Sun* over the story of the assassination of President Lincoln in 1865.

Toward the turn of the century (during the Spanish-American War), technical improvements and a circulation war between the Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers in New York helped speed the adoption of multicolumn headlines. Important stories were introduced by screaming headlines (banners) across the entire page, followed by as many as eight or more related heads. Sometimes headlines occupied more space than their stories.

However, by the end of World War I, many editors began experimenting with headlines that were more streamlined and more compact. They found the space they saved could be used more advantageously for news and advertising — especially advertising, which then as now, paid the bills.

HEADLINE FUNCTIONS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Identify the functions of the headline.

The modern trend in headlines is toward simplicity. Most newspapers now use heads that say what has to be said in a minimum of words. A good headline conveys the news in a story and the significance and meaning behind the story. It never implies more — and should not say too much less — than what actually appears in the story. It does not contain misleading suggestions and it does not leave false impressions.

An easy way to remember the functions of the headline is through the acronym **HEADS**:

H - Heralds the day's news; tells what is of importance.

E - Entices the reader with essential or interesting facts.

A - Advertises the most important story by size or placement on the page (the most important stories are displayed at the top of the page).

D - Dresses up a page with typography; helps make design attractive.

S - Summarizes the story with a “super” lead; tells what the story is about.

HEADLINE STYLES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Recognize the various types of headline styles.

There are several ways in which you can display headlines. For style variation, your headlines can be set in all-caps, caps and lowercase or downstyle. These methods are covered in the following text.

ALL-CAPS HEADS

The all-capital letter headline style is almost extinct. All-caps heads, while they are easier to write than others, are the most difficult to read. To test this premise, read the following paragraph:

AS THIS PARAGRAPH DEMONSTRATES, THE ALL-CAPITAL SETTING IS NEITHER EFFICIENT FOR THE READER, NOR PLEASING TO THE EYE. WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST USED TO HAVE KEY GRAPHS IN HIS EDITORIALS SET ALL-CAPS. INSTEAD OF MAKING THE POINT EMPHATICALLY, AS HE INTENDED, SUCH SETTING ACTUALLY CUT DOWN THE READERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT.

Even the most patient, attentive and skilled reader will be blinded by the onslaught of all those capital letters. By the way, did you spot the typo?

CAPS AND LOWERCASE HEADS

A widely used headline style is the uppercase and lowercase head. In this headline style, all words, other than articles, conjunctions, and prepositions of fewer than four (and sometimes five) letters, are set with the first letter in caps and the others in lowercase.

DOWN-STYLE HEADS

The down-style head usage has increased in popularity in recent years. In down-style heads, the first letter of the first word — and the first letter of any proper noun — is set as a cap, and all other letters are lowercase. Down-style is presented in the way persons are taught to read and write. The style is visually attractive and enhances the readability of the line. By design, it lacks the numerous capital letters in a headline which serve as “eye stoppers.”

Local pilot had unique role in Desert Storm

Story and photo by
Vance Vasquez

Two years ago, Jan. 17, the United States and other United Nations coalition forces joined together to liberate occupied Kuwait from Iraqi forces.

Operation Desert Storm affected the lives and careers of thousands of military personnel by participating in the first Congressionally-authorized war since World War

II.

One such person, Cmdr. Robert E. Noziglia Jr., aircraft maintenance officer of Naval Air Weapons Station, Point Mugu, had a unique role in Desert Storm.

Noziglia was interviewed by Ambassador Edward W. Genhum, Jr., the U.S. designate for Kuwait, in Washington D.C., Sept. 15, 1990. He was selected to head the reconstruction of the Kuwait Air Force.

A Kuwaiti 747 airliner,

was used to transport 86 contract technicians along with their supplies to Khamis Mushayt, Saudi Arabia. They departed from Andrews Air Force Base, Md., and arrived in Saudi Arabia, Sept. 16, 1990.

"The technicians were both retired Navy and Marine Corps personnel with A-4 Skyhawk experience," said Noziglia.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait and overwhelmed the

small country, only a small portion of the Kuwait Air Force was able to escape into Saudi Arabia. A total of 18 A-4KU and two TA-4KU Skyhawks, attack aircraft along with 15 F-1 Mirage fighters and three L110-30 (C-130) transport aircraft were saved.

The Kuwait Air Force arrived with no support facilities available; no equipment, tools or aircraft log books, which were left be-

hind in Kuwait.

"The aircraft was unique since no other country operated A-4KU Skyhawks; we were able to assemble new log books from information obtained from the United States," said Noziglia.

After the technicians arrived 34 days later, the A-4KU's were moved from Khamis Mushayt and were forward-deployed to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The A-

4KU's were stationed far away from Iraq to avoid any possible airstrikes before the United Nations mandate for Iraq to leave Kuwait was ordered. The Kuwait Air Force was integrated with The Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) under a single command.

The coalition forces of France, Qatar and Kuwait operated the F-1 Mirage.

(Cont'd on page 5)

Figure 9-2.—Banner head.

Expanded dependents dental plan nears implementation

(ARNEWS) — More details were set for the expanded Dependents Dental Plan, in a workshop held by the Office of the Civilian Health and Medical Program for the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS).

Enrollment in the expanded benefits plan will be automatic

for all sponsors with eligible family members, even if the sponsor had previously declined enrollment or had disenrolled from the basic plan.

However, sponsors stationed outside the continental United States when the extended plan begins will not be automatically enrolled, unless they are

already enrolled in the basic plan.

There will be a 90-day disenrollment period for those who wish to decline the new

program. Some issues still remain open, such as the monthly premium, co-payment cost and a premium rate for junior soldiers.

Figure 9-3.—Crossline head.

HEADLINE FORMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Identify the most common headline forms.*

Headline forms constantly come and go. Regardless of the form, the most common headlines are easy to read, easy to write and easy to set. Some of the most common headline forms are explained in the following text.

BANNER HEAD

The banner head (fig. 9-2) is set the full-page width at the top of a news page to draw attention to the lead story or that particular page. If you run a banner head above the flag or nameplate, it is called a skyline. A streamer applies to the widest and biggest multicolumn head on a page, regardless of whether it is the full width.

CROSSLINE HEAD

The crossline head (fig. 9-3) is very similar to a banner headline. Although it does not always span the full width of the page, it does cover all the columns of the story to which it pertains.

FLUSH LEFT HEAD

The flush left head (fig. 9-4) is a two- or three-line head with each line set flush left. The lines do not have to be equal in width or set full. The white space at the right is considered enhancing, because it allows "air" into the otherwise stuffy column spaces. Flush left is the most commonly used head today.

NEX gift certificates great holiday gift idea

Do you have a hard time selecting the right gift for everyone on your holiday list? Do you spend hours guessing at the proper size and color? If this is you, your holiday shopping just got a lot easier.

Navy Exchanges have just introduced a new worldwide NEX gift certificate. The new gift certificates are available and redeemable at any Navy Exchange around the world. They come in three convenient denominations — \$10, \$25 and \$50. Select the amount that's right for you.

Navy Exchange gift certificates aren't just for Christmas either. They make the perfect gift for birthdays, weddings or any other special occasion.

Since gift certificates are good at any Navy Exchange, at home or abroad, they are the gift that's easy to send to friends and family wherever they may be located. However, the person receiving the certificates must be an authorized Navy Exchange customer in order to enjoy using the gift certificates.

Navy Exchange gift certificates are easy to buy, too. Just see the customer service representative at your local NEX.

Pick up Navy Exchange gift certificates for everyone on your list this season. They are the gift that always fits. Your Navy Exchange makes holiday giving and holiday shopping a pleasure.

Figure 9-4.—Flush left head.

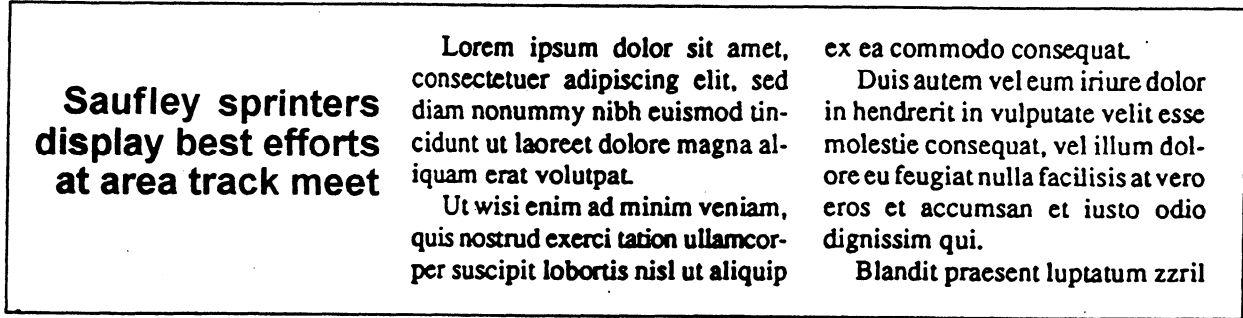


Figure 9-5.—Side head.

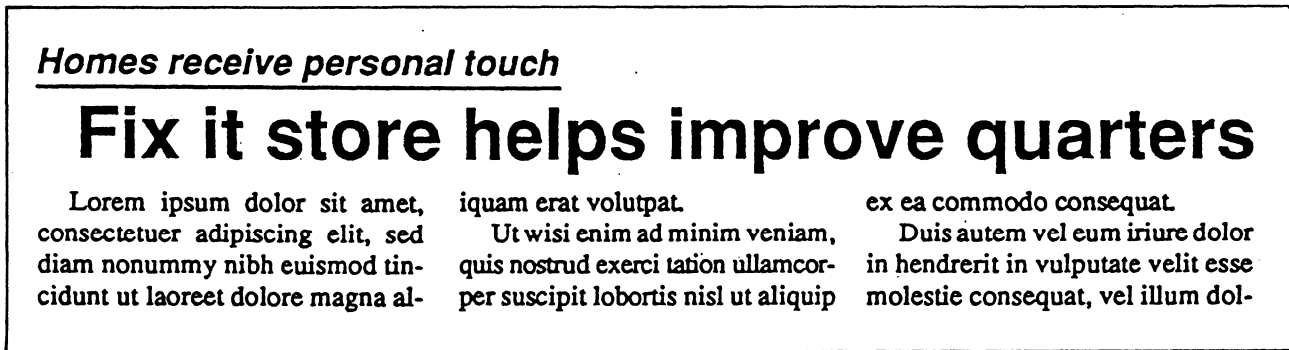


Figure 9-6.—Kicker.

SIDE HEAD

The side head (fig. 9-5) is a headline form that runs alongside a story. It is normally three or four lines and looks best when set flush right. A side head is usually placed slightly above the center of the story.

KICKER

The kicker (fig. 9-6) opens up the area on a page where the headline is located. It can be used to introduce a feature article with a pun line above the main head

The following are some basic rules for you to follow when writing kickers:

- Extract kicker information from the bridge or the body of the story.
- Do not repeat words in the kicker and main head. Interpretation of the main head should not depend on information in the kicker.

- Make the kicker 1/2 the point size of the main head. For example, a 36-point main head will have an 18-point kicker.
- Set the kicker 1/3 to 1/2 the width of the main head. For example, a three-column main head requires a one-column to 1 1/2-column kicker.
- Alternate type postures to give the head the proper emphasis. For instance, a roman style main head requires an italic kicker and vice versa.
- Indent the main head two counts (headline unit counting will be explained later) under the kicker, to add white space.
- Always underline the kicker.
- Do not use a kicker at the top of a page.

HEADLINE VARIANTS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Recognize the most common variations of standard headlines.

Spotlight

Figure 9-7.—Standing head.

World Series

Continued from Page 21
consectetur adipiscing elit, sed
diam nonummy nibh euismod tin-
cidunt ut laoreet dolore magna al-

iquam erat volutpat.
Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam,
quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcor-
per suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip

ex ea commodo consequat.
Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor
in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse
molestie consequat, vel illum dol-

Figure 9-8.—Jump head.

Champs!

Lion matmen capture all-Germany title

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, con-
sectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam non-
ummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet
dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis
nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit
lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo
consequat.

Figure 9-9.—Hammer head.

There are countless variations of headline styles, all of which are viewed in terms of their visual impact when used with basic headline styles. Some of these variants are explained in the following text.

STANDING HEAD

The standing head (fig. 9-7) is essentially a label used for regular or recurring content, such as sports and chaplains' columns. It does not change from issue to issue.

JUMP HEAD

The jump head (fig. 9-8) is designed to help the reader find a portion of a story continued from another

page. The jump head uses one or two key words from the headline that introduced the story. It is set flush left followed by the words "Continued from Page ##," usually set in boldface body type (it also can be set in italic). A two-point rule maybe used to extend from the side of the head over the width of the article.

HAMMER HEAD

Often called a **reverse kicker**, the hammer head (fig. 9-9) is set twice the size of the main head, set flush left and is no wider than half the width of the headline area.

Growth: NAVSTA seeks additional aid for building expansion plan

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tin-

cidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam,

quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Figure 9-10.—Tripod head.

NAVSTA seeks additional aid for building expansion plan

Growth

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tin-

cidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam,

quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat.

Figure 9-11.—Wicket head.

How C=C=C-Cold Is It...?

Figure 9-12.—Novelty head.

TRIPOD HEAD

The tripod head (fig. 9-10) is a single, short line of larger type set to the left of two lines of smaller type. The tripod portion (larger wording) should be twice the size of the definition or main headline. For example, a 36-point tripod would dictate that the main head be set in 18-point type to give the true tripod appearance. Punctuation in the form of a colon is required when the tripod conveys a separate thought.

WICKET HEAD

The wicket head (fig. 9-11) is a tripod in reverse (short line of larger type set to the right of two lines of smaller type). The colon is not used in the wicket. Although it is seldom used, on occasion, you may consider it to vary your newspaper design.

NOVELTY HEAD

The novelty head (fig. 9-12) features typographical tricks, such as setting part of the head upside down, using an ornate typeface or substituting artwork as characters. Use the novelty headline sparingly with appropriate feature articles. Overuse of this headline may lead to your readership questioning the credibility of the newspaper.

HEADLINE WRITING SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Recognize the components and attributes required in headline writing.

Headline writing requires skill and concentration. Your headline must give the essence of the story. While explaining the story accurately, your headline also must fit into a limited space.

Some copy editors approach headline writing by looking for a key word or two that expresses the high point of the story. Then they add other words until they have a headline. Other copy editors begin by forming a sentence that contains the essential elements of the story. Then they edit out excess words (adverbs, adjectives, articles, and so forth) and minor details until all that is left is a well-tailored headline that tells the story essentials.

Headlines are written in *telegraphic English*, a term coined because they closely resemble the wording found in most telegrams. While the consideration in telegrams is mostly monetary, the economical consideration of headlines is space. Therefore, headlines usually contain — as the “bare bones” of language — a subject and verb. Other strong uses of telegraphic English might include subject-predicate or subject-verb-object constructions.

A straight news headline is written for a straight news story and a feature headline for a feature story. If the story is a colorful account of some event or trip, the headline should be colorful. If the story is a romantic or dramatic account of an event, the headline should follow form. If it is a human interest story with an element of pathos, the headline should not be humorous. If the story is humorous, the headline should not be pathetic.

In the following text, we will cover some of the general principles of headline construction practiced by most copy editors.

USE OF VERBS

The key to good headline writing is the use, whenever possible, of strong action verbs. Headline writers use verbs in what is sometimes called the “historical present” tense — meaning they use the present tense verb to describe action that has already happened. Primarily, this tense is used to convey a sense of immediacy, in the same way many people normally speak in the present tense to describe exciting experiences to friends. Present tense verbs contain fewer letters than do their past tense forms.

Verbs may be omitted when implied. For example, the verb “appears” is implied in the following headline:

Acadia Boatswain's Mate On 'Supermarket Sweep'

However, do not overuse this approach. Action verbs are still best for capturing a reader's attention. The

verbs *is* and *are* are frequently understood. It is not necessary to use them except for clarity. The infinitive “to be” is also awkward in headlines and you should avoid using it. Note the following examples:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Poor: | New pay raise is approved |
| Better: | New pay raise approved |
| Poor: | Halloween Dance to be held
Oct. 31 at Fleet Park |
| Better: | Halloween Dance slated
Oct. 31 at Fleet Park |

Do not begin a headline with a verb that might convey the imperative mood (implying a command). Note the examples that follow:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Poor: | Reject new pay hike
for armed forces |
| Good: | Armed forces pay hike
rejected by Congress |
| Better: | Congress rejects
new pay hike
for armed forces |

To give the reader a better sense of immediacy, the verb should be in the first line of a headline whenever possible. When you can avoid it, do not place the verb in the bottom line of a three-line head.

ARTICLES

Omit all articles (*a*, *an*, *the*) and other unnecessary words. Note the following example:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Poor: | Today's submariners are “lucky”
says veteran of the USS <i>Grant</i> |
| Better: | Today's submariners “lucky”
says USS <i>Grant</i> veteran |

VOICE

Use the active voice in preference to the passive voice whenever possible. Note the following examples:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Poor: | More pilots
being sought
for T-45 test |
| Better: | Navy seeks
more pilots
for T-45 test |
| Poor: | Navy flight training
bolstered by new T-45 |
| Better: | New T-45s bolster
Navy flight training |

DECKS

Make each deck (not necessarily each line) a complete construction. Write the headline so it will stand alone and make sense, especially when you use it as the main deck. Consider the following example:

Poor: Decade of off-duty study
cans degree at Memphis

Better: Memphis chief earns law degree
after decade of off-duty study

Because headlines are restricted to a small space, copy editors generally limit headlines to one specific idea expressed forcefully, rather than several ideas expressed vaguely. If space permits, editors sometimes connect two independent thoughts by a semicolon in a headline — or add another section to the headline (a second deck) — to include additional important aspects of the story.

If a story involves a plane crash that kills one crew member, injure the pilot and disrupts a training exercise, you should limit the main deck to the death. Subordinate headlines, or the story, should cover the other news.

BE SPECIFIC

As with all forms of newswriting, the use of specifics is better than generalities. Note the following headline:

Auto crash
proves fatal

This headline does not contain nearly as much information as the headline that follows:

2 die as car
smacks tree

BE POSITIVE

Another custom most headline writers observe is phrasing headlines in a positive, rather than in a negative manner. This is based on the principle that a newspaper is supposed to tell readers what **did** happen, not what **did not** happen.

When writing about a family that escapes injury when their car overturns and bums on a highway, a novice headline writer would probably write the following:

No one hurt
in car fire

Given the same story, a good headline writer composes the following headline:

Family escapes
flaming death

OPINIONS

Headlines on stories dealing with opinion should show the source of that opinion. If a story is attributed to a secondhand source, this should be reflected in the headline. Consider the following examples:

'Courts too lenient'
claims parish priest

NFL players unhappy
with owners' offer
says arbitrator

REPEATS

You should avoid repeating words in the same headline deck. Also, watch out for similar phraseology in adjacent heads and decks. Consider the following example:

Former *Abraham Lincoln* journalist
returns to *Abraham Lincoln*
as public affairs officer

THE FIVE Ws

A good headline generally has the **who** and the **what** of the story in the first line, with the following lines explaining the **how** and **why**, if necessary.

People expect newspaper stories to concern events that have occurred since the previous edition was published. Therefore, the **when** can usually be omitted. If an event is yet to happen, however, warn the reader by the inclusion of the **when** through the use of the future tense or a specific day or date.

The **where** in a headline on a local story is generally omitted. Readers expect their newspapers to print local stories and will assume a story is local unless the dateline or headline specifies otherwise.

SHORT SYNONYMS

Use short, vigorous words. Headline writers usually have a vocabulary all their own. They learn to think in terms of short synonyms for longer expressions when writing headlines. Many copy-editing texts contain lists of short synonyms for headline use. Note the following examples:

- **Named** for appointed or elected
- **Set** for arrange or schedule

- **Win** for victory
- **Ex** for former
- **Job** for appointment or position
- **OK** for accept, approve or adopt
- **Try** for attempt
- **Vet** for veteran
- **Hike** for raise or increase
- **Tell** for reveal or inform

In addition to these synonyms, many more are commonly used in Navy newspapers. Some of these are as follows:

- **Sub** for submarine
- **Flyer** or **pilot** for aviator
- **Jet** for jet-propelled aircraft
- **All hands** for entire ship's company
- **Ships** for reenlists
- **Crew** for crew members
- **Plane** for aircraft or airplane
- **XO** for executive officer
- **CO** or **skipper** for commanding officer or captain

SPLITS

Do not split words, phrases, proper nouns or compound nouns between lines. Note the following examples:

Words:

5,000 PO1 advance-
ments predicted off
September examinations

Phrases:

Crew members of
USS Basil Fome
visit Funafuti

Proper Names:

Capt. Robert J.
Matron assumes
command of HC-16

Compound Nouns:

Saufley chief petty
officers sponsor
orphans' picnic

LINE BALANCE

Try to balance headlines typographically. Consider the following examples:

Unbalanced:

Navy, Coast Guard icebreakers
save U.K. ship

Balanced:

Navy, Coast Guard icebreakers
rescue grounded U.K. corvette

ABBREVIATIONS

You should use commonly known and accepted abbreviations when they are appropriate. Do not be afraid to use Navy abbreviations for ships, aircraft, ratings, ranks, commands, titles, and so forth, in ship and station publications.

The following are some commonly used Navy abbreviations:

CPO for chief petty officer

PO1, PO2 and **PO3** for petty officer grades

ComRats for commuted rations

NCO for noncommissioned officer

LDO for limited duty officer

GQ for general quarters

SecNav for Secretary of the Navy

CNO for Chief of Naval Operations

Use these and other Navy abbreviations only in ship or station publications. Never use them in press releases to civilian news media. For further information, consult the latest edition of *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*.

PUNCTUATION

Newspaper editors generally adhere to the following style for headlines:

- Use single quotation marks instead of double.

- Use commas to replace the word *and*. Also, where natural, use commas to make pauses or breaks in headline construction.
- Use semicolons to divide thoughts, where needed especially three-line heads.
- Use periods only after abbreviations.
- In a caps and lowercase head, start each line and every important word with capital letters.
- Articles (which are rarely used) and prepositions (which do not lead off a line) are not capitalized in a caps and lowercase head.

HEADLINE FITTING METHOD

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Summarize the method used to fit headlines properly.

To make sure a headline fits in its allotted space, you can use a form of measurement called a “unit count.” This system assigns each letter, number, punctuation mark and space character a specified number value. The area on a newspaper page is limited, so it is important that you use the unit count system properly.

“Flit-j” UNIT COUNT SYSTEM

Headline counting systems vary from newspaper to newspaper. However, in this section, we use the standard system in the newspaper industry today — the “flit-j” unit count system. The letters that compose the name of this system act as a crutch to remind you what groups of letters receive unique values when counting the headline.

The “flit-j” unit count system is determined by the following rules:

- All lowercase letters and spaces between words or characters each receive one (1) count.

EXCEPTIONS: **f, l, i, t** and **j** each receive one-half (0.5) count; **m** and **w** each receive one and one-half (1.5) counts.

- All uppercase letters and all numeric characters each receive one and one-half (1.5) counts.

EXCEPTIONS: **M** and **W** each receive two (2) counts; **I** and the numeral **1** each receive one (1) count.

- All punctuation characters each receive one-half (0.5) count.

EXCEPTIONS: Each hyphen (-) receives one (1) count; each dollar sign (\$) or question mark (?) receives one and one-half (1.5) counts; each dash (—) receives two (2) counts.

In counting the units in a headline, you place one tick mark over each character or space that has a count of one; place two tick marks over each character that has a count of two; and place one tick mark beneath each character that has a count of one-half.

For example, say you want to count the units in the following headline:

Congress approves \$2 billion year-end budget

First, either write or type the headline on a sheet of paper. Then place the tick marks in pencil, as shown in the following example:

```

////////////////////  //////////////////////
Congress approves $2 billion year-end budget
/               / / / / / /               /

```

After placing the tick marks, total the whole number count values and then add any one-half count values. Note the following example:

```

                22                17
////////////////////  //////////////////////
Congress approves $2 billion year-end budget
/               / / / / / /               /
½                ½ ½ ½ ½ ½ ½                ½
                (4)

```

In this example, the headline count is 43. If the count does not fall within the range of allowed minimum and maximum values for the headline width on the headline schedule, try to change the verb to make it fit. If the headline still does not fit, work with other words in the headline. If you cannot make it fit by changing the other words, begin again with a new headline.

HEADLINE SCHEDULES

Maximum unit count limits are predetermined for various newspaper column widths for each headline size of a particular typeface or font. These count limits are provided in charts or lists called headline schedules. A sample headline schedule is shown in figure 9-13.

HEADLINE CHART				
KEY	HEADLINE	COUNT	DESCRIPTION	SIZE
A5	Interim 'O' Club Work Starts	23-26	TEMPO BOLD REG.	60 PT.
B5	Early Separation Set for Some EMs	32-34	TEMPO BOLD REG.	48 PT.
C5	Community Chest Drive Begins Oct. 1	32-35	TEMPO BOLD ITL.	48 PT.
D3	September Production Baseball Team Plans Busy Holiday Card	15-21	SPARTAN ITL.(KICKER)	24 PT.
		18-21	TEMPO BOLD REG.	42 PT.
E3	Interservice Baseball Bluejackets Favored To Win Tournament	15-21	SPARTAN REG.(KICKER)	24 PT.
		17-20	TEMPO BOLD ITL.	42 PT.
F3	10 Tournaments Scheduled	21-24	TEMPO BOLD REG.	36 PT.
G3	From Lake Michigan Shhh! Don't Tell a Soul: NTC Is 'Stealing' Land	15-21	SPARTAN REG.(KICKER)	18 PT.
		20-23	TEMPO BOLD ITL.	36 PT.
H2	Sailor Killed Hitch Hiking On Freeway	10-11½	TEMPO BOLD REG.	48 PT.
I2	SAs Must Be Okayed For E-3 by Wednesday	19-21	TEMPO BOLD REG.	30 PT.
J2	Lost Your Last Friend? Let Locator Help You	20-22	TEMPO BOLD ITL.	30 PT.
K2	4 Honor men from 3 Schools To Receive Certificates Today	23-28	SPARTAN REG.	24 PT.
L1	248 Students In 7 Schools Finish Today	10-12	TEMPO BOLD REG.	36 PT.
M1	Tomasi, O'Hall Lead Carpsmen	12-14	TEMPO BOLD REG.	30 PT.
N1	C. Hren Grid Star In Co. 79	7-9	TEMPO BOLD ITL.	30 PT.
O1	Wave Softball Nine Schedules Kenasha Girls	12-14	SPARTAN REG.	24 PT.
P1	Caprin Wilde Sends Greeting	11-14	SPARTAN ITL.	24 PT.

Figure 9-13.—Sample headline schedule.

The chart gives the minimum-maximum unit count for each line based on the number of columns the line stretches across. Each headline listed on the chart is often given a key, or code, that tells the printer the name of the type style and the number of columns the headline covers. As shown in figure 9-4, a headline with a key "A5" would indicate a headline set in a 60-point type style called Tempo Bold Reg., which has a minimum-maximum unit count of 23-26 stretched across five columns (the number indicated in the "AS" key).

CUTLINES

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Detail the methods used in gathering material for cutlines and identify cutline components, typography, layout and datelines.

Photographs have a unique storytelling ability. They are most effective when accompanied by some explanatory text.

A missile launching may make an exciting photograph, but it fails as a news vehicle unless the reader understands the **when**, **where** and **why** of the photograph, as well as the more obvious **what** and **how**.

The function of providing information the photograph does not furnish is performed by the photograph's cutline, also known as a photo caption. A cutline supplements the photograph by explaining action, naming people and giving background information.

The cutline writer is normally a middleman, who takes a photograph (which is inflexible) and adds the cutline (which is flexible) and comes out with a story. The cutline writer determines what additional information must be given to communicate the story the photograph is meant to tell.

Cutline writing is a specialized form of news-writing. It answers the same basic questions as the news story. Yet, it does this in a single, concise paragraph. The cutline writer must be alert to answer any questions the photograph may arouse in the reader's mind.

PHOTOGRAPHERS NAME		DATE AND TIME
SUBJECT/SLUG		LOCATION
POC NAME AND PHONE		ROLL #
FRAME #	ACTION	I.D. (NAMES, EQUIPMENT, LANDMARKS)

Figure 9-14.—Sample caption log.

GATHERING OUTLINE INFORMATION

There is no secret formula to gathering outline information. However, there are certain practices you should follow that will allow you to write effective outlines after you return to your office. These practices are covered in the following text.

How to Record Outline Information

Cutline information may be recorded in a notebook or a locally designed “caption log.” A caption log may serve as a handy reminder of what information you should record. An example of a locally designed caption log is shown in figure 9-14.

What Cutline Material Is Recorded

When you gather material for cutlines, you generally use the same methods and techniques as for gathering information for a news story. The major difference is that you do not need as much information, but it must be pertinent to the scene in the photograph.

The following are a few points to consider before you write a cutline:

- What is the storytelling value of the photograph?
- Is the photograph intended for internal or external use? (Photographs for civilians may need more information.)
- Will the photograph be released to a hometown paper? If so, you must include a hometown tie-in.
- Will the photograph be used alone or with a story?

With these basic considerations in mind, try to stick with the old but reliable five Ws (and H) when you gather cutline material. Find the answers to the most pertinent questions, and you will have more than enough information to write your cutline.

WHO.— Identify people in the photograph by rank full name, title, hometown, and so forth. Also note relative positions of people in the photograph when there are more than one and if it is not obvious who is who by action, age, gender or rank. Sometimes it is helpful for you to note the clothing or physical characteristics of the people being photographed. Keep in mind that when you or your photographer use black-and-white film, it will do little good to note “yellow T-shirt” or “red dress” on the caption log.

However, such notations as “Mets T-shirt,” “sunglasses” or “curly blond hair” will prove helpful.

WHAT.— The “what” can apply to two areas. First, it may involve what is happening in the photograph. In the caption log, it may be necessary to jot down a word or two to describe the action. For example, “slicing cake,” “performing PMS check” or “donning EEBD.”

Second, the “what” may entail equipment in the photograph. Unusual equipment often is included in photographs. The equipment should be identified. An OBA may not require identification, but an OBA with a lifeline attached may need further elaboration. Ships and aircraft should always be identified. Never guess or suppose you know the proper nomenclature; ask an expert on the scene.

WHERE.— Make sure you record the location of the action. Write down the name or number of street names, building names or numbers, and so forth. If there are landmarks, either natural or man-made, identify them as well. These might include rivers, lakes, statues, bridges and mountains.

WHEN.— Record the time and date the photograph was taken. This is especially important for “wild” or “stand-alone” photographs that will not be accompanied by a story.

WHY.— Unless it is obvious, record why an action is taking place. Is it part of a base basketball championship or a monthly awards ceremony? As in the “when” category, this is important for photographs that will stand by themselves.

HOW.— If there are circumstances that led to the photograph being taken and they require explanation, make sure you know how they came about.

Matching Cutline Information with the Photograph

You should record cutline information by individual frame number. However, if you shoot several frames of the same subject and action, it is not necessary for you to record information each time. Simply list the range of frame numbers in which the subject appeared.

When to Record Cutline Information

Record the cutline information immediately after each shot or series of shots. Do not let subjects get away without jotting down the required cutline information. They may be hard or impossible to track down later, and

you may forget who you shot or who was doing what in the photograph.

One exception to this practice is a sporting event where it is impossible to interrupt the action. In this instance, let the subject(s) know in advance that you will be taking photographs and will need to get identification as soon as possible after the event. Note uniform numbers, clothing or physical characteristics. You also may record the information during breaks in the action.

CUTLINE COMPONENTS

We will not go into detail here on how your photographs should be posed and what to look for in the way of composition. This will be covered in Chapter 12, *Basic Photojournalism*. The primary concern now is the text that accompanies the photograph and how it should be written. Although newswriting and cutline writing are closely related, they are different.

The lead in a news story is the most important part of the story. The facts presented in the lead may be expanded and elaborated on in the bridge and body of the story.

The cutline differs in that it is more than a part of the story — it is the **whole** story. Everything you have to say about the photograph is said in one paragraph. That paragraph must contain the essential facts, and the facts must be tied into the scene in the photograph. The length of a cutline is always governed by what must be told about the photograph. It may consist of one word, one sentence, or it may consist of five sentences.

Cutlines have no set lengths. Strive for simplicity and brevity. The shorter you can write a cutline and still include all the essential information, the better it will be.

As in headline writing, a cutline is written in a manner appropriate to the subject matter. In other words, write a news cutline for a news photograph and a feature cutline for a feature type of photograph.

There are probably as many ways to write cutlines as there are newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. Just about every publication has its own individual requirements and style of cutline writing. Some want long cutlines. Some want only one or two words to tease a reader into reading the accompanying story. Others use no cutline at all.

Only one method of cutline writing will be covered in this chapter. It is considered the handiest formula for a novice writer and consists of the following four major components:

- The action
- The identification (persons or things in the photograph)
- The background information
- The credit line

The Action

The first sentence of a cutline is the most important. It must link with the photograph by describing its action.

One of the peculiarities of the first sentence is its verb form. The verb in the first sentence of a cutline is in the present tense. The reason for this is that photographs, like paintings and sculpture, capture one moment of time and keep it in the present.

Another reason for using the present tense in the first sentence is that it gives the readers a sense of immediacy, as though they were actually witnessing the event shown. Thus a cutline that reads, “Navy Seaman Jack Crevalle **swims** through swirling flood waters of the Baylinguay River to rescue 6-year-old Tia Maria...” has more dramatic impact than one that reads, “Navy Seaman Jack Crevalle **swam** through. . .”

One problem that arises from the use of the present tense in the first sentence is what to do with the **when** element. To put the time element in the first sentence would result in a sentence such as “Ryan Thompson hits a line drive to center field yesterday. . .” This is somewhat jarring to the reader and should be avoided.

To alleviate this problem, you can usually reserve the time element in cutlines for the second sentence. This avoids awkward sentences such as the one just quoted.

The Identification

The second part of a cutline is the identification. This includes an identification of all persons and things vital to the storytelling function of the photograph. Everyone who is involved in the central action of the photograph should be identified. Do not identify persons who are blurred out, obscured or too far away for recognition. Anyone in a photograph who attracts the reader’s attention should be identified. The reader’s curiosity should never be impeded. If the identity of a pertinent figure in a photograph is unknown, make this fact a part of the cutline.

The next question concerning identification, is where should it be placed in the cutline? The best answer

is, it should come as high as possible in the paragraph. Many times it will be possible to identify people at the same time the action is described. For example, in the statement "Seaman Apprentice Jay B. McMannus sounds taps to climax Memorial Day ceremonies . . ." the identification is included as the subject of the action. Sometimes, however, it may be preferable to use an impersonal identification (such as "A Navy musician sounds . . .") in the first sentence. In that case, the complete identification should come in the second sentence.

The only exception to the ground rule previously stated is in the case of group identification. When there are several people to be identified in a photograph, it is better that you not clutter the first two sentences with a list of names. This is apt to discourage the reader from finishing the cutline. The recommended way to handle a group photograph is that you use an impersonal identification in the first sentence (such as, "A group of sailors . . ."). then list the names later in the cutline. This achieves complete identification without cluttering the important first sentence.

The identification itself can be handled in one of several ways. The idea is to handle it in the most natural and concise manner consistent with clarity. The best way to identify people is by action. If Kip Karuthers is throwing a pass to Ronnie Gate, it should be obvious from the photograph which one is passing and which one is receiving the ball. Thus they are identified by their activity, and you will not have to use left and right identifications.

Another simple manner of identifying people in a photograph is by obvious contrast. If there are two sailors and an officer in a photograph, it is not necessary to identify the officer as being to the left, or in the center. The officer is well-identified by obvious contrast, therefore, place identification would be superfluous.

Identification by elimination is slightly more complex. Suppose there are four people in a photograph. One of them is receiving a medal from another. These two are identified by the action. A third person is the award recipient's wife. She is identified by obvious contrast. Therefore, the fourth person is identified by elimination.

For example, the identification in the cutline might be handled in the following manner:

"Lt. Wayne E. Pilot receives the Distinguished Flying Cross from his squadron leader, Cmdr. William A. Aviator. Lt. Pilot's wife, Gertrude, and Lt. Cmdr. Thomas V. Hoek, VAP-99 XO, look on."

Finally, there is the traditional left, right, center or "from the left" identification. It is not necessary to say "from left to right." This wastes space. If one starts from the left, there is no place to go but right! Use this type of identification only when the other means of identification will not suffice or when there is a chance of the reader becoming confused.

In cutline identification, avoid bromides, such as "pictured above" or "shown above." It is apparent to both the editor and the reader that something is pictured or shown above the cutline. Even worse are such phrases as "posing for this picture are . . ." or "smiling for the camera is . . ."

The Background Information

The third component of the cutline is the background information. This consists of additional facts or explanations needed to clarify the subject matter of the photograph. The length of this section of the cutline depends on two factors mentioned earlier: (1) where the photograph will be used and (2) how the photograph will be used.

The amount of background information needed to explain a photograph of carrier operations to a civilian reader will obviously be greater than that needed to explain it to crew members who are participating in such operations.

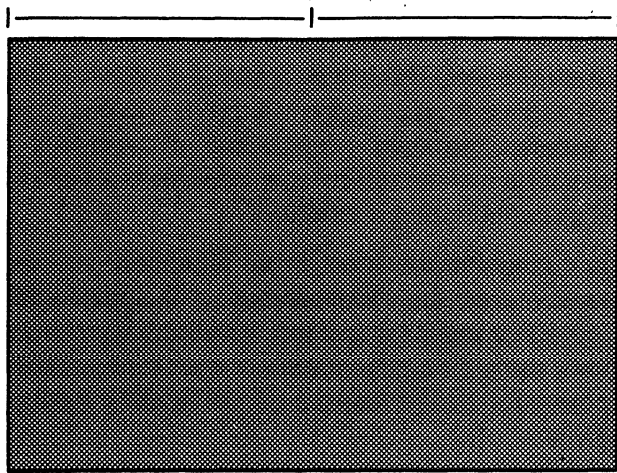
If a photograph is to accompany a news story, do not duplicate details used in the story. If the photograph is to be used alone, the cutline must be complete.

Cutlines prepared for picture stories are similar to those written for single photographs, except that a story is told by means of a series of related photographs. In this case, a main cutline, usually written for the lead or key photograph of the story, can supply background information for the entire story.

Although present tense is used to describe the action, the correct past, present or future tense is used when presenting background facts related to the action. However, you should be careful of changing tenses in the middle of a sentence.

The Credit Line

The last component of the cutline is the credit line. Most ship and station newspapers use credit lines for photographs.



This Picture taken for man assault in to have
 woman have been in the same way.
 Government has been the same way.

Figure 9-15.—Cutline set two columns wide.

There are several ways of crediting photographs. Some newspapers and magazines give photographers personal credit lines (this is encouraged for ship and station newspapers). Others use a blanket statement which states, for instance, that “all photos are U.S. Navy photos unless otherwise credited.” However, the recommended way is to put the credit line at the end of the cutline itself. The credit line should follow the last word of the cutline, in parentheses in the following manner: (U.S. Navy Photo by JO3 Evelyn Grudge) or (U.S. Navy Photo).

CUTLINE TYPOGRAPHY

If you are writing cutlines for external release, do not concern yourself with the way the cutline will be set in type. However, if you edit a ship or station newspaper, you will need some knowledge of cutline typography.

Good cutline typography heightens the impact of a photograph by making the explanatory text as visually appealing as possible. It is a good idea to rewrite and reset Navy Editor Service (NES) cutlines, because they may violate your local style, and the typefaces used may not match yours.

For better display, cutlines are usually set in a larger or a different typeface than that used in the news columns. Some papers use the same size and style as their body type, except that it is set boldface.

Cutlines under multicolumn photographs are best displayed when set two columns wide for two-column photographs (fig. 9-15) or a column-and-a-half wrapped for three-column photographs (fig. 9-16). The term *wrapped* means to place two or more columns of type side by side under one heading or piece of art. Cutlines should not be set wider than two columns.

Captions

The word *caption*, while often used as a synonym for the word *cutline*, has a second meaning. It is a small headline, or display line, sometimes used with cutlines.

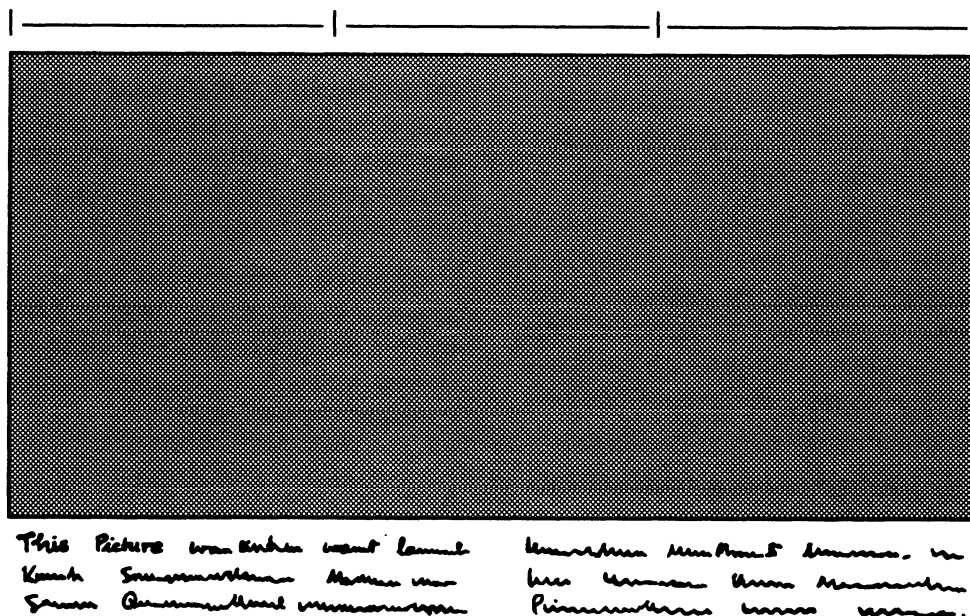


Figure 9-16.—Cutline for a three-column photograph set a column and a half wide.

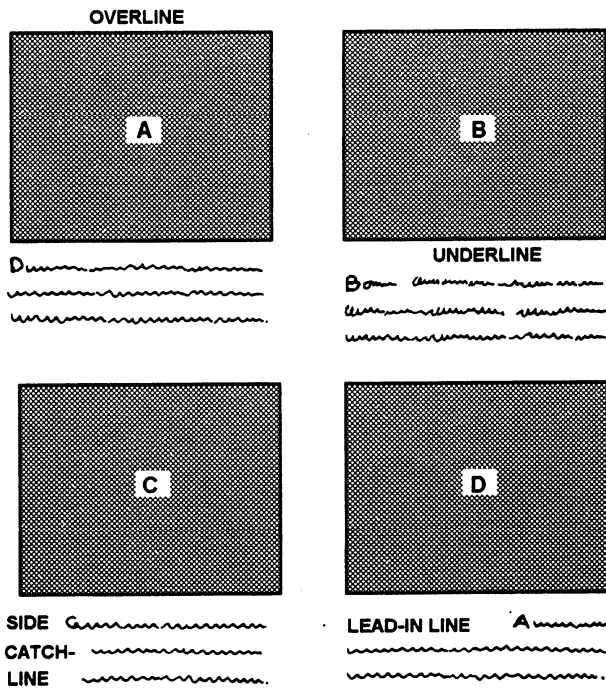


Figure 9-17.—The four basic caption forms: (A) overline (B) underline, (C) side catchline and (D) lead-in line.

Its function is essentially the same as those used over a news story as follows:

- To summarize
- To attract attention
- To dress up the page

There are several kinds of captions in this context. An **overline** runs above the photograph. An **underline** runs between the photograph and the cutline. The **side catchline** is used with photographs of three columns or more and runs on the left side of the cutline. If a headline is not used, the first few words of the cutline maybe set in boldface or all capital letters to serve as a **lead-in line**. These four types of captions are shown in figure 9-17. All such display lines should be in large type, preferably the kind used in a small headline.

Mortised Photographs

Photographs that contain dead areas of sky or unimportant background can be mortised (a rectangular window, or space, is cut out and the cutline is placed in the space). This saves page space and may actually improve the photograph.

CUTLINE LAYOUT

When laying out a page, you should treat each photograph and its cutline as one unit. The relationship of photograph to cutline must be obvious. Readers will seldom spend much time hunting for misplaced cutlines. In addition, cutlines may be run beside or above photographs. This adds variety, and in some cases, enhances page layout.

It is a common practice for most newspapers to run the story and accompanying photographs side by side. Because of space limitations, however, this is impractical at times. If a story and an accompanying photograph must be separated in a newspaper for any reason, the two are still “keyed” together. For example, if the photograph appears on page one and the story on page four, the cutline will carry a line that says “Story on page 4.” This keys the two together for the reader’s convenience.

There are times when a newspaper may not have space to publish both story and photograph. When this happens, one or the other will be discarded. If it is the story that gets the toss, the cutline must be rewritten to include more details.

When a photograph and cutline are released with a story or when you are writing a story and cutline for your command’s newspaper, the best practice is to write the story first. After the story is written, write the cutline for the photograph. There are two important reasons for this — (1) it enables you to avoid any duplication of phrases or ideas that appear in the story and (2) it enables you to write tighter, more compact cutlines. After writing the story, you have the salient features clear in your mind, and the act of paring the cutline down to its essentials becomes much easier.

DATELINES

When preparing cutlines for photographs to be released externally, you need not concern yourself with display lines. You merely write your cutline in complete and simple sentence form. An additional component must accompany a cutline for outside release — the dateline.

The dateline answers the question “where?” and is used as a lead-in to the cutline. For example, a datelined cutline might read: “ABOARD THE USS UNITED STATES AT SEA — Carrier pilots leave . . .”

Additional information on datelines maybe found in *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*.

